

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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R 141455Z FEB 75

FM AMCONSUL LUANDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3262

INFO AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

CINCLANT FOR POLAD

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT MILI AO

SUBJECT: FIGHTING IN LUANDA - NETO'S FORCES ATTACK CHIPENDA -
SIT REP NO. 1.

1. AT ABOUT THREE A.M. FEBRUARY 13, MPLA TROOPS SIMULTANEOUSLY ASSAULTED THE HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER OFFICES OF THE "EASTERN REVOLT" FACTION OF DANIEL CHIPENDA IN LUANDA. THE ATTACK WAS LAUNCHED SHORTLY AFTER MPLA PRESIDENT AGOSTINHO NETO STATED IN A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT STEPS HAD TO BE TAKEN TO ELIMINATE THE DANGER FROM CHIPENDA.

2. FIGHTING FLARED FOR SEVERAL HOURS IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE GHETTOES RINGING THE CITY AND CONTINUED UNTIL LATE AFTERNOON IN ONE SECTION. SMALL ARMS, GRENADES AND ROCKET PROPELLED

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GRENADES WERE USED. CASUALTY FIGURES GIVEN BY THE PORTUGUESE HIGH COMMAND PUT THE KILLED AT THREE OR FOUR AND 15 TO 20 WOUNDED.

PRESS REPORTS AND OTHER SOURCES INDICATE THAT AS MANY AS 20 WERE KILLED AND MANY MORE WOUNDED, BUT SAO PAULO HOSPITAL, WHICH IS LOCATED IN THE CENTER OF THE AREAS WHERE THE VIOLENCE OCCURRED, HAS TOLD US THERE ARE ONLY FOUR DEAD. IT IS CLEAR THAT MOST OF THE CASUALTIES WERE SUFFERED BY THE ATTACKING MPLA FORCES, WHO LOST THEIR CHIEF-OF-STAFF FOR THE LUANDA REGION IN THE FIGHTING.

3. NETO'S FORCE APPARENTLY DID SUCCEED IN OCCUPYING CHIPENDA'S MAIN HQ FOR AT LEAST A FEW HOURS, BUT CHIPENDA'S TROOPS WERE IN CONTROL LATER IN THE DAY. IN A MOVE DESIGNED TO PREVENT MORE FIGHTING THE PORTUGUESE ARMY HAS PROVIDED "PROTECTIVE CUSTODY" TO CHIPENDA FORCES IN LUANDA. UNITS FROM THE PORTUGUESE ARMY AND ALL THREE LIBERATION GROUPS ARE PATROLLING THE AFFECTED AREAS, ALTHOUGH IN SOME PLACES ONLY ARMORED CARS CAN MOVE ABOUT SAFELY.

4. LATE ON FEBRUARY 13 MPLA ISSUED A CALL FOR A DEMONSTRATION IN FRONT OF THE GOVERNMENT PALACE TO PROTEST CHIPENDA'S ILLEGAL ARMED PRESENCE IN ANGOLA. THE NATIONAL DEFENSE COUNCIL ORDERED THE DEMONSTRATION TO BE CANCELLED AND MPLA LATER AGREED.

5. SO FAR THERE HAS BEEN NO REACTION FROM FNLA OR CHIPENDA TO THESE EVENTS. FNLA HAS CALLED A PRESS CONFERENCE FOR FEBRUARY 14 AND SOME RELIABLE SOURCES BELIEVE THEY WILL ANNOUNCE THAT CHIPENDA HAS JOINED FNLA.

6. BBC ON THE MORNING OF FEBRUARY 14 CARRIED A REPORT THAT FIVE MALE NURSES WERE KILLED IN A LUSO HOSPITAL DURING FIGHTING IN THAT CITY. WE CHECKED OUT THIS STORY WITH THE ARMY COMMANDER HERE, WHO SAID IT HAD NO BASIS IN FACT; LUSO IS QUIET. THE BBC PICKED UP THE STORY FROM A REUTERS DISPATCH FILED HERE THE EVENING OF FEBRUARY 13.

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